



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park
P. O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7615(YOSE-PM)

Memorandum

To: Rob Grasso, Project Manager, Yosemite National Park

From: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Subject: NEPA and NHPA Clearance: 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition (60771)

The Superintendent and park interdisciplinary team have reviewed the proposed project and completed an impact analysis and documentation, and we have determined the following:

- There will not be any effect on threatened, endangered, or rare species and/or their critical habitat.
- There will be no historic properties affected.
- There will not be serious or long-term undesirable environmental or visual effects.

The subject proposed project, therefore, is now cleared for all NEPA and NHPA compliance requirements as presented above. Project plans and specifications are approved and construction and/or project implementation can commence.

For the proposed project actions to be within compliance requirements during construction and/or project implementation, the following mitigations must be adhered to:

- Per the Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion: the NPS shall ensure the all conservation measures of the Biological Opinion are fully implemented for the proposed project.

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations: None

For complete compliance information see PEPC Project 60771.

//Michael T. Reynolds//
Michael T. Reynolds

Enclosure (with attachments)

cc: Statutory Compliance File

The signed original of this document is on file at the
Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in
Yosemite National Park.

Letter of Compliance Completion – 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition -
PEPC ID: 60771



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition

PEPC Project Number: 60771

Project Description:

High elevation aquatic ecosystems in Yosemite National Park have experienced a 95% decline of the once common and endemic Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYF), due in part to predation by non-native trout. Historically, high elevation aquatic ecosystems (above 5,000 feet) did not contain fish due to impermeable barriers (e.g. waterfalls) in Yosemite Valley for the Merced River and Hetch Hetchy Valley for the Tuolumne River. The practice of fish planting started in Yosemite in the 1870s and continued through 1991. In 2000-2002, non-native trout were found in 9% (245 of 2655) of all Yosemite lakes, and in 54% (112 of 209) of lakes suitable for both trout and SNYFs. This project would seek to restore populations of the endangered SNYF to 20 - 30 lakes and meadows over the next 7 - 10 years.

Standardized surveys for SNYF presence/absence and abundance will be conducted annually at 30 - 50 sites within the park. Survey sites include locations with potential source populations and locations where previous restoration efforts have occurred. Aquatic ecosystems selected for restoration are near, or adjacent to, existing frog populations where natural recolonization is likely. Whenever possible, sites containing brook trout are preferred for removal since they are not native to the surrounding Sierra Nevada region.

We propose to remove non-native fish from 10 - 20 lakes or lake complexes primarily using gillnets. All captured fish are removed by hand, identified, measured, and counted. All carcasses are then either deposited into woven canvas sacks (biodegradable) and sunk in the deepest portion of the lake to retain the nutrients to the lake system or placed in dry-sacks and hiked out and deposited in bear proof dumpsters. Fish are removed from inlet and outlet streams of the lake using a battery-powered electrofisher device. Pack stock will be used to transport gear and frogs, with the possibility of one or two helicopter flights per year contingent on approval of a minimum requirement analysis. Removal of non-native fish is expected to take 3 - 4 years per site and a site is declared fishless after two consecutive winters of no fish captured.

Adult frogs are gently captured by hand and dip net at selected donor sites. Between 20 - 100 adult frogs will be collected depending on what the donor site can handle losing in one year without detrimental effects. The numbers we translocate will depend on balancing the objective of creating the largest founding population at a new recipient site while minimizing impacts to the donor population. The frogs are removed from the water and placed back in the water inside a mesh holding pen (roughly 1 meter squared). They are measured, weighed, and often microchipped ("PIT tagged"). In the past, frogs have been treated with an antifungal drug, but it is not likely that this treatment will be necessary. The handling process takes less than 10 minutes per frog (usually 5 minutes). The capture is usually done in the late afternoon and processing (weighing, etc.) takes place thereafter. The frogs spend the night in the holding pen, if they are being transported by helicopter, they are loaded in the morning into individual containers for transport. If the frogs will be transported by stock support or by backpack on a human, they may or may not overnight in a holding pen. If they are transported by backpack on a human, they will be hiked out at night (timed to give the most favorable climate conditions for the frogs). If they are transported by pack stock, they will be moved in insulated coolers (with cool packs) and will likely be packed out in the early morning.

The goal of this restoration effort is to re-establish self-sustaining frog populations in the park in strategic habitat areas. The SNYF is a keystone species, and with their reintroduction, aquatic insects will rebound, bird species will increase in abundance and wildlife observations improve.

Project Locations:

Mariposa, Madera, and Tuolumne Counties, CA

Mitigations:

- No mitigations identified.

CE Citation: E.2 Restoration of noncontroversial native species into suitable habitats within their historic range and elimination of exotic species.

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

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Environmental Planning and Compliance Office in
Yosemite National Park.

Superintendent: //Michael T. Reynolds//

Michael T. Reynolds

Date: 8/30/18

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?	No	
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?	No	
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?	No	
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?	No	



ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition
PEPC Project Number: 60771
PMIS Number: 195414
Project Type: Restoration (REST)
Project Location:
County, State: Mariposa, Madera, and Tuolumne Counties, California
Project Leader: Rob Grasso

B. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Air Air Quality	None	
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species	None	
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat	Potential	This project aims to reintroduce the federally endangered Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. The project will have a beneficial impact to the frog by establishing self-sustaining populations. The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office prepared a Biological Opinion which agreed with the project and outlined conservation measures.
Biological Vegetation	None	
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species	Potential	This project will have a beneficial impact on the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog by establishing self-sustaining breeding populations.
Cultural Archeological Resources	None	
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	None	

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	None	
Cultural Museum Collections	None	
Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	None	
Geological Geologic Features	Potential	The project calls for the placement of captured frogs to be placed in mesh holding pens that are staked into the lake bed at a shallow depth. The holding pens will be removed when frogs are transported.
Geological Geologic Processes	None	
Lightscares Lightscares	None	
Other Human Health and Safety	None	
Other Operational	None	
Socioeconomic Land Use	None	
Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.	None	
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	None	
Soundscapes Soundscapes	None	
Viewsheds Viewsheds	None	
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources	None	
Visitor Use and Experience	Potential	The park aquatic ecologist developed proper take provisions in coordination with the Fish and Wildlife Service in part because of

Environmental Screening Form (ESF) - Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition - PEPC ID: 60771

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Visitor Use and Experience		proximity to visitors to the endangered species.
Water Floodplains	None	
Water Marine or Estuarine Resources	None	
Water Water Quality or Quantity	None	
Water Wetlands	None	
Water Wild and Scenic River		
Wilderness Wilderness	None	

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ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Yosemite National Park

2. Project Description:

Project Name: 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition

Prepared by: Renea Kennec **Date Prepared:** 3/16/18 **Telephone:** (209) 379-1308

PEPC Project Number: 60771

Locations:

County, State: Madera, CA

County, State: Mariposa, CA

County, State: Mono, CA

County, State: Tuolumne, CA

Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])

Cold Mtn., Bartlett Lake, Miwok Lake, Ardeth Lake, Virginia Lake, Upper Mattie Lake, Tiny McCabe Lake, Dog Lake, Middle McCabe Lake, Hutchings, Upper Bernice, Gallison, Budd Lake, Roosevelt Lake, Upper Doe, Tallulah Lake, Harriet Lakes, Hoover Lakes, Thompson Canyon, Reymann Lake, Nelson Lake, Obelisk Lake, Hoffman Basin, Upper Young Lake, Mono Meadow, Turner Meadow, Conness Pond, Unicorn Basin, Clark Fork Lakes, East Merced Pass Lake, Skelton Lake, Miller Lake, So. Lyell Canyon Lakes, Obelisk Lake, Breeze Lake, North Lyell Canyon Lake and Kuna Basin lakes

3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify historic properties?

☐ No

☒ Yes

Source or reference:

4. Potentially Affected Resources:

Archeological Resources Affected: None

Historical Structures/Resources Affected: None

Cultural Landscapes Affected: None

Ethnographic Resources Affected: None

5. The proposed action will: (check as many as apply)

☐ No ☐ Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure

No Replace historic features/elements in kind

No Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure

No Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)

No Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape

No Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible

No Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible

No Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources

No Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources

No Involve a real property transaction (exchange, sale, or lease of land or structures)

 Other (please specify): _____

6. Supporting Study Data:

(Attach if feasible; if action is in a plan, EA or EIS, give name and project or page number.)

B. REVIEWS BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

The park 106 coordinator requested review by the park's cultural resource specialist/advisors as indicated by check-off boxes or as follows:

[X] 106 Advisor

Name: Kimball Koch

Date: 03/16/2018

Comments: Introduction of the frogs, as described, would not affect any historic properties. Per park cultural resource program manager, no historic architect review required because no historic buildings or structures are affected. The park documented the action as being "No Historic Properties Affected". Email correspondence dated July 19, 2018 from Mark Beason of the SHPO's office stated that "This undertaking seems to have no potential to affect historic properties." The SHPO did not send any formal response documenting their assessment of effect as of August 22, 2018.

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance []

Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect X No Historic Properties Affected No

Adverse Effect Adverse Effect Streamlined Review

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: Standard 4-Step Process

[X] Anthropologist

Name: Scott Carpenter

Date: 03/16/2018

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance []

Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect X No Historic Properties Affected No

Assessment of Effect Form – 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition - PEPC ID: 60771

Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect ☐ Streamlined Review ☐
Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

☒ Archeologist

Name: Sara Dolan

Date: 03/16/2018

Comments: There are no archeological concerns related to the project. No archeological monitoring is required.

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance ☒

Assessment of Effect: ☐ No Potential to Cause Effect ☒ No Historic Properties Affected ☐ No

Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect ☐ Streamlined Review ☐

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: Standard 4-Step Process

☒ Historian

Name: Scott Carpenter

Date: 03/16/2018

Comments: No historical architect review needed because there are no historic buildings or structures affected.

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance ☐

Assessment of Effect: ☐ No Potential to Cause Effect ☒ No Historic Properties Affected ☐ No

Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect ☐ Streamlined Review ☐

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

☒ Historical Landscape Architect

Name: Kimball Koch

Date: 03/16/2018

Check if project does not involve ground disturbance ☐

Assessment of Effect: ☐ No Potential to Cause Effect ☒ No Historic Properties Affected ☐ No

Adverse Effect ☐ Adverse Effect ☐ Streamlined Review ☐

Recommendations for conditions or stipulations:

Doc Method: Standard 4-Step Process

No Reviews From: Curator, Historical Architect, Other Advisor

C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Effect:

☐ No Potential to Cause Effects
☒ No Historic Properties Affected
☐ No Adverse Effect
☐ Adverse Effect

2. Documentation Method:

☒ A. STANDARD 36 CFR PART 800 CONSULTATION

Further consultation under 36 CFR Part 800 is needed.

☐ B. STREAMLINED REVIEW UNDER THE 2008 SERVICEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT (PA)

The above action meets all conditions for a streamlined review under section III of the 2008 Servicewide PA for Section 106 compliance.

APPLICABLE STREAMLINED REVIEW Criteria
(Specify 1-16 of the list of streamlined review criteria.)

☐ C. PLAN-RELATED UNDERTAKING

Consultation and review of the proposed undertaking were completed in the context of a plan review process, in accordance with the 2008 Servicewide PA and 36 CFR Part 800.

Specify plan/EA/EIS:

☐ D. UNDERTAKING RELATED TO ANOTHER AGREEMENT

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under another document such as a statewide agreement established in accord with 36 CFR 800.7 or counterpart regulations.

☐ E. Combined NEPA/NHPA Process

Documentation is required for the preparation of an EA/FONSI or an EIS/ROD has been developed and used so as also to meet the requirements of 36 CFR 800.3 through 800.6

☐ G. Memo to SHPO/THPO

☐ H. Memo to ACHP

SHPO/THPO Notes: The park documented the action as being “No Historic Properties Affected”. Email correspondence dated July 19, 2018 from Mark Beason of the SHPO’s office stated that “This undertaking seems to have no potential to affect historic properties.” The SHPO did not send any formal response documenting their assessment of effect as of August 22, 2018.

3. Additional Consulting Parties Information:

Additional Consulting Parties: No

4. Stipulations and Conditions:

Following are listed any stipulations or conditions necessary to ensure that the assessment of effect above is consistent with 36 CFR Part 800 criteria of effect or to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects.

5. Mitigations/Treatment Measures:

Assessment of Effect Form – 2015-031 Restore Rare Frogs in High Mountain Lakes to their Natural Condition - PEPC ID: 60771

Measures to prevent or minimize loss or impairment of historic/prehistoric properties:
(Remember that setting, location, and use may be relevant.)

No Assessment of Effect mitigations identified.

D. RECOMMENDED BY PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR:

Kimball
Koch //Kimball Koch// **Date:** 8/23/18

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

The proposed work conforms to the NPS *Management Policies* and *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, and I have reviewed and approve the recommendations, stipulations, or conditions noted in Section C of this form.

Superintendent: //Michael T. Reynolds// **Date:** 8/30/18

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